

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

It is asserted that these amendments do not add new matter and are supported by the specification and claims as originally filed. Entry of these claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-22 have been rejected.

Claim 14 has been amended.

Claims 15-22 are kept unchanged.

New claim 23 has been filed

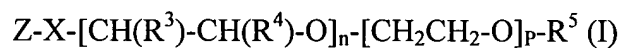
Claims 14-23 are pending in the application.

Claims 14-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over WO 96/01245.

Claim 14 has been amended to eliminate a typo relative to the mention of formulae a) to g).

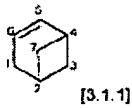
New claim 23 is a merger of amended claim 14 and claim 18.

The instant invention as claimed relates to a process for degreasing a hard metal surface, comprising the step of using an aqueous medium comprising at least one compound employed in a concentration of from 0.01 to 10 g/l, having the following formula (I):



wherein:

- Z represents a group having the following formula:



The selected claimed Z radical is now commensurate with the obtained improvement as shown in the comparative examples of the instant invention. Applicant is of the opinion that the improvement cannot be considered as little for one of ordinary skill in the art of degreasing a hard metal surface, at the time of the invention. The Examiner asserts that the unexpected result showed in the previous amendment was a “little better” within the claimed y range when x is 3. Applicant respectfully submits that the improvement shown is greater by far than a “little better”. Indeed, examples and comparative examples show a degreasing time dramatically reduced with the claimed compounds. Degreasing time decreases of 75% for the worse comparative example, or of 33% for the best comparative example $[(45-30)/45]$. Improvements of 33%-75% in the instant technical field should be considered as much more than a “little better”.

WO 96/01245 only teaches that the performance of a surfactant effect may be modified by manipulating the degrees of ethoxylation and propoxylation. However, a surfactant effect is clearly distinct from a degreasing effect. Thus improving the surfactant effect does not necessarily means that greasing will be improved. Greasing is a process involving much more than having a simple surfactant effect. One might have a compound having good surfactant properties with poor degreasing effects. Therefore, the person of ordinary skill in the surfactant art would not have considered the teaching of manipulating the degrees of ethoxylation and propoxylation for modifying surfactant properties as relevant for modifying degreasing. There is no

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AMENDMENT

technical rationale for saying that improving degreasing when manipulating the degrees of ethoxylation and propoxylation was expected in view of the reference.

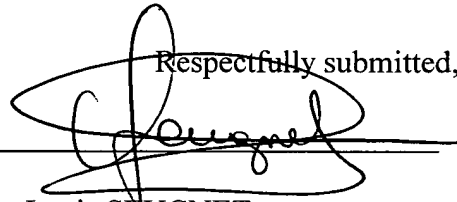
Applicant submits that new claim 23 does not border the preferred range of [1-3] disclosed in the cited reference.

For these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner now reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 14-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over WO 96/01245.

In view of the preceding remarks, it is asserted that the patent application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any question concerning these remarks that would further advance prosecution of the claims to allowance, the examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned agent at (609) 860-4180. A notice of allowance is respectfully solicited.

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